

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 /113 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5095
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY OSLO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 2795

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, UNGA, RQ, US, CU, NO
SUBJECT: COMMITTEE OF 24 (C-24) CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO:
STATE OF PLAY

REF: LAGOS 9856

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ON AUGUST 30, MISOFFS DISCUSSED STATE OF
PLAY OF C-24 CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO WITH VRAALSEN (NORWAY).
VRAALSEN SAID THAT THE CUBAN DECISION TO TABLE A RESOLUTION ON
PUERTO RICO RESULTED FROM PRESS CRITICISM OF CUBA, THE
APPEARANCE OF A WIDE SPECTRUM OF POLITICAL STATUS ADVOCATES,
IN PARTICULAR COMMONWEALTH SUPPORTERS, AND CUBAN PERCEPTIONS
THAT US, CUBAN RELATIONS WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE ISSUE.
MISOFFS INFORMED VRAALSEN OF THE GIST OF AMBASSADOR EASUM'S
CONVERSATION WITH CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER MALCIERA. VRAALSEN IS
SEEKING AN APPOINTMENT WITH CUBAN PERM REP ALARCON ON AUGUST 30 AND
WILL KEEP US INFORMED. HE IS OPTIMISTIC THAT A CONSENSUS
CAN BE ACHIEVED. END SUMMARY.

2. ON AUGUST 30, ACTING POLITICAL SECTION HEAD AND
MISOFF MET WITH NORWEGIAN DEPUTY PERM REP AND C-24
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VICE-CHAIRMAN VRAALSEN, WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FROM
LAGOS. VRAALSEN SAID THAT THE CUBAN DECISION TO TABLE
THE DRAFT RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO RESULTED FROM THE
FOLLOWING FACTORS:

--PRESSURE BOTH IN THE PUERTO RICAN PRESS AND FROM
PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE GROUPS ACCUSING CUBA OF A

"SELL-OUT;"

--THE PRESENCE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL POLITICAL STATUS PERSUASIONS AT THIS YEAR'S C-24 PROCEEDINGS, AND IN PARTICULAR OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY. (MISSOFF NOTED THAT THE PDP'ERS APPEARED IN THEIR PERSONAL CAPACITY WITHOUT ANY OFFICIAL CACHET AND THAT FORMER GOVERNOR HERNANDEZ COLON WAS MAKING THAT CLEAR IN A LETTER TO C-24 CHAIRMAN SALIM);

--CUBA'S ASSESSMENT THAT THE C-24 EXERCISE WOULD NOT RPT NOT HAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR EVOLVING US/CUBAN RELATIONS. ALARCON RETURNED FROM HAVANA WITH FLEXIBLE INSTRUCTIONS NOT REQUIRING HIM TO SUBMIT A RESOLUTION, BUT IT WAS DECIDED AT A LAST-MINUTE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING BASED ON THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS TO SUBMIT THE RESOLUTION.

3. VRAALSEN REVIEWED DISCUSSIONS IN LAGOS WITH ALARCON IN WHICH SALIM, ABDULAH (TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO) AND HE HAD PARTICIPATED. ALL ACKNOWLEDGED A GENERAL SENTIMENT IN FAVOR OF DONSensus IN THE COMMITTEE AND THE DESIRABILITY OF AVOIDING A DIVISIVE VOTE. IN A LATER CONVERSATION, ALARCON TOLD VRAALSEN OF THE GOC'S ASSESSMENT THAT US/CUBAN RELATIONS WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE OUTCOME OF C-24 CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO. VRAALSEN VOLUNTEERED TO CHECK THIS WITH US AND FOLLOWING A CONVERSATION WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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AMBASSADOR MCHENRY AND MCHENRY'S SPECIFIC AUTHORIZATION, INFORMED ALARCON THAT ADOPTION OF THE CUBAN DRAFT "WOULD DEFINITELY" AFFECT US/CUBAN RELATIONS. VRAALSEN ALSO INFORMED ALARCON THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IS SEEKING TO MAKE PROGRESS ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES, INCLUDING THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY, WHICH ADOPTION OF THE CUBAN RESOLUTION COULD IMPEDE. VRAALSEN SUGGESTED TO ALARCON THAT HE RAISE THE ISSUE AGAIN WITH HIS FOREIGN MINISTER AND THAT HE AND VRAALSEN TALK AGAIN IN NEW YORK. AT THIS POINT, MISSOFF INFORMED VRAALSEN OF THE GIST OF AMBASSADOR EASUM'S CONVERSATION WITH CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER MALCIERA AND ALARCON IN LAGOS OF WHICH VRAALSEN WAS UNAWARE (REFTEL).

4. VRAALSEN SAID THAT HE WOULD SEEK OUT ALARCON DURING THE COURSE OF THE AFTERNOON (AUGUST 30) AND WOULD KEEP US FULLY INFORMED OF THE RESULTS OF HIS CONVERSATION. WHEN INFORMED THAT AMBASSADOR LEONARD WAS ALSO SEEKING A MEETING WITH ALARCON, VRAALSEN COMMENTED VERY FAVORABLY ON SUCH A MEETING AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT LEONARD WILL MAKE CLEAR THE ADOPTION OF THE CUBAN RESOLUTION WOULD AFFECT US/CUBAN RELATIONS AND ALSO THAT THE US

PRESS, WHICH HAS PAID RELATIVELY LITTLE ATTENTION TO THE
PUERTO RICAN ISSUE THUS FAR THIS YEAR, WOULD
FOCUS ON THE ISSUE IN FULL FORCE.

5. MISOFF NOTED THAT VARIOUS C-24 MEMBERS HAD RAISED
THE POSSIBILITY OF A MOTION TO POSTPONE IF A
CONSENSUS IS NOT ACHIEVABLE. VRAALSEN ESTIMATES THAT
SUCH A MOTION WOULD NOT BE ADOPTED, AND THAT ITS FAILURE
WOULD LEAD TO A GREATER MARGIN OF VICTORY
FOR THE RESOLUTION ITSELF. HE
PRESENTLY ESTIMATES THAT THE CUBAN RESOLUTION
WOULD BE ADOPTED BY A THREE OF FOUR-VOTE MARGIN IF PRESSED
TO A VOTE. VRAALSEN INDICATED CONFIDENCE THAT HE AND
ALARCON COULD WORK OUT AN ACCEPTABLE CONSENSUS
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ARRANGEMENT.
LEONARD

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